

Safe, Supportive, and Nurturing Schools

OBJECTIVE: We need all students to feel safe, supported, and nurtured. We need community-centered solutions to conflict resolution, mental health counseling, affordable healthy food access, and family support in our schools. We need innovative alternatives to existing security procedures, focusing on restorative justice and community-centered counseling rather than processes that funnel students into the criminal justice system. We need to equitably support and compensate teachers across Durham, focusing on hiring and retaining diverse teachers and staff so that students can see themselves reflected in school leaders.

BACKGROUND: Currently, many students say they do not feel physically or mentally safe while attending school in Durham. Youth, particularly youth of color, report feeling unsafe in school because of police presence and the swift, punitive measures used when conflicts arise. Frequent and unannounced active shooter drills create mental and emotional stress as both students and teachers face the terrifying possibility of this situation. Many students in Durham rely on school to provide nutritious food and a quiet, safe learning environment. Residents are concerned that detention, suspensions, and other disciplinary measures are disrupting students' learning and impeding their future opportunities. Residents want to see an end to the school-to-prison pipeline.

We want schools that are designed with the health and well-being of students, parents, staff, and the community in mind, prioritizing the needs of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ students, and students with special learning needs.

Quotes from Durham Residents

"If kids fight at school, they get helped, not sent to jail. No suspensions. Instead, do job training."

"DPS should recruit teachers from within our community with local expertise- give our students pride in our and its history"

"At the schools, there are empty pill bottles in the school yard"

"destroy school to prison pipeline"

"eliminate public school truancy and expulsion rates (address the root causes of the problems)"

"working with minority teachers to keep them. Too much paperwork for teachers, not enough support for them"